

UCLA Faculty Association

News and opinion from Dan Mitchell since 2009

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Monday, April 21, 2025

More Subway Construction: Late Evening-Early Morning



Yesterday, we posted some birds-eye-view photos of ongoing subway construction. Here is a recent notice which provides a reminder to avoid Wilshire when coming to UCLA if possible.

Demolition of Southeast Plaza of 10900 Wilshire Bl

Summary

Metro contractors will begin demolition of the southeast plaza of 10900 Wilshire Bl. Work is anticipated to begin Thursday, April 24 and continue for up to eight weeks. Activities include dismantling of existing structures, removal and hauling of waste material, and preparation of the site for future construction.

Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025, for up to eight weeks

Work hours: Monday to Friday, 9 pm to 6 am

Traffic Control:

Phase 1: Closure of #2, 3, and 4 lanes of eastbound Wilshire Bl, between Veteran and Westwood Bl and the west leg of the pedestrian crosswalk at the intersection of Wilshire and Westwood Bl.

Phase 2: Closure of #4 lane of eastbound Wilshire Bl, between Gayley Av and Westwood Bl and the west leg of the pedestrian crosswalk at the intersection of Wilshire and Westwood Bl.

Thru-traffic and driveway access will be maintained at all times. Pedestrians will be detoured to adjacent crosswalks during work hours.

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Source: https://cloud.sfmtc.metro.net/DemoSoutheastPlaza_WilshireBl.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: traffic, transportation, UCLA

Disability Lawsuit

From the [Bruin](#):

Two students are suing UCLA and the UC Board of Regents for allegedly discriminating against people with disabilities, thereby violating federal and state law. The two plaintiffs – third-year student Jake Bertellotti and graduate public health student Taylor Carty – alleged in the lawsuit that UCLA repeatedly failed to address their concerns about inaccessible emergency evacuation protocols. The lawsuit alleged that these issues violate the Americans with Disabilities Act, federal antidiscrimination law, federal and state housing law and California government code.



The Council of UC Faculty Associations

- Concerns Regarding UCOP Cybersecurity Mandate
- CUCFA and AFT call upon UC to immediately address Student Visa Revocations
- Federal Investigations of UC Faculty Members
- We Support AB-672, A First Step Towards Protecting PERB's Authority
- Emergency Day of Action March 19, Noon

Remaking the University

- Will the California State Legislature Accept Governor Newsom's Manufactured Austerity for Four-Year Higher Education? (Guest Post) - 4/28/2025
- Are Universities Preparing to Fight Back? (Guest Post) - 4/25/2025
- National Day of Action: Who Rules the Academy, and How To Fight Back (Guest Post) - 4/23/2025

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- Chronicle of Higher Education
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The complaint requests that the university hire an expert on emergency planning for people with disabilities and conduct an evaluation of its compliance with the ADA. Additionally, it requests more staff for Center for Accessible Education, improved procedures for tracking disability accommodations and revised systems for securing BruinAccess transit...

Full story at <https://dailybruin.com/2025/04/17/students-with-disabilities-sue-ucla-uc-regents-for-discrimination>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: [diversity](#), [transportation](#), [UCLA](#)

Sunday, April 20, 2025

State Auditor's Recommendations for UC Repatriation of Native American Objects

From the State Auditor's report:

Key Findings and Recommendations

The federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), passed in 1990, and its 2001 California counterpart (CalNAGPRA) establish requirements for the return of Native American human remains (remains) and cultural items. Government agencies and museums, including universities, must repatriate, or return, these remains and cultural items to tribes affiliated with them. This audit is the third that our office has conducted of the University of California's (university) compliance with NAGPRA and CalNAGPRA. To complete this audit, we reviewed four campuses—Berkeley, Riverside, San Diego, and Santa Barbara—as well as the Office of the President and conclude the following:



The University Does Not Know How Much Work Remains to Achieve Full Repatriation and Has Not Properly Cared for All Items It Possesses

Although we found that campuses have continued to repatriate remains and cultural items, it has been more than 30 years since the establishment of NAGPRA, and the university's campuses still hold the remains of thousands of individuals, as well as hundreds of thousands of cultural items and potential cultural items. We refer to these remains, cultural items, and potential cultural items as collections. A variety of factors, including some that are outside of the university's control, create uncertainty about when the campuses will complete repatriation of their collections. However, at their current pace, we estimate that it may take some campuses over a decade to reach full repatriation.

Further, additional collections continue to be revealed. In one case, we found that Santa Barbara had not reported all of its collections to the national NAGPRA program and its state equivalent and, because of that, it is likely that tribes have an incomplete understanding of that campus's holdings. The campuses also continue to discover previously unknown collections. For example, both Riverside and San Diego recently discovered previously unknown remains on their campuses, and Santa Barbara identified approximately 1,500 potential cultural items about which it was previously unaware. Although the university's systemwide NAGPRA policy (systemwide policy) requires campus NAGPRA staff to periodically search campus departments at high risk of having undiscovered NAGPRA collections, campuses' searches are not complete, and the Office of the President has not systematically kept track of the searches campuses have performed

Finally, we found instances in which the university has not properly cared for all items in its possession. For example, Santa Barbara has not yet retrieved several outstanding loans of potential cultural items, and Davis displayed potential cultural items in a campus lecture hall from which they were stolen in 2022. The systemwide policy does not explicitly state how campuses should handle or store potential cultural items.

Despite Years of External Attention, the Office of the President's Oversight of Campuses' NAGPRA Implementation Is Deficient

The Office of the President has not effectively overseen the university's compliance with NAGPRA, despite years of increased external attention. We found that the Office of the President has not created a framework of policies and practices that ensures accountability for compliance or effective and efficient repatriation. For example, the Office of the President required campuses to plan for how they would repatriate their collections, but it did not hold campuses accountable when the plans lacked required timelines or when campus plans became outdated. The university's systemwide NAGPRA committee (systemwide committee) noted deficiencies when reviewing the plans, but the Office of the President did not require campuses to make corrections, thereby limiting the usefulness of these plans for the systemwide committee's efforts to oversee campus repatriation.

Also, since 2022 when it established its expectation that campuses plan for repatriation, the Office of the President has not established systemwide performance goals for repatriation. Although campuses established certain campus-specific goals, the Office of the President did not hold campuses accountable for their actual performance. For example, the Office of the President has not monitored whether campuses have met their goals to repatriate specific collections within the last few years.

Because the university lacks systemwide performance goals, it has contributed funding toward NAGPRA compliance without a clear understanding of whether these amounts were appropriate. The Office of the President's review of campuses' NAGPRA budgets noted whether these budgets balanced personnel and non-personnel costs, but it did not determine whether the budgeted amounts were appropriate for meeting specific goals or benchmarks at each

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Contributors

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campus. Each campus's budget represents the total amount of resources the campus plans to spend on its NAGPRA activities. However, we found that three campuses—Berkeley, San Diego, and Santa Barbara—carried over to future fiscal years significant amounts of unspent funding they had allocated to NAGPRA, including funding meant to support tribes.

Given the pervasive weaknesses we observed in the Office of the President's oversight of NAGPRA, we believe the Legislature may have a role in applying external accountability—such as by earmarking a specified amount of the university's appropriation identified for NAGPRA—to improve the university's performance.

Recent Changes to Federal Regulations Present Challenges to California's Repatriation Goals

Effective January 2024, the federal regulations that govern the implementation of NAGPRA changed. Some of these changes have significant impacts for CalNAGPRA, which used to provide an avenue for the transfer of certain remains and cultural items to non-federally recognized California tribes. The revisions to the federal regulations no longer allow campuses to transfer certain remains and certain items to non-federally recognized tribes, severely hampering campuses' ability to fulfill the intent of CalNAGPRA. We identified no clear path for the State to amend CalNAGPRA to allow for campuses to transfer certain remains and items to non-federally recognized tribes in conformity with NAGPRA. However, the university can initiate discussions with tribal stakeholders regarding any preferences they may have for reinterment protocols and adopt these protocols as part of any revised systemwide policy.

To address our findings, we have made recommendations to the university to create a strong system for identifying undiscovered remains and items and strengthen its requirements regarding the proper care of potential cultural items. We recommend that Santa Barbara report all of its collections as required. We further recommend that the Office of the President require campuses to create and update timelines for completing specific activities, establish systemwide performance goals, monitor the university's progress in meeting its goals, and ensure that campus budgets align with those goals. In addition, we recommend that the university engage tribes to study their costs related to repatriation and align its systemwide policy with the revised federal regulations.

Agency Comments

The Office of the President and Santa Barbara agreed with our recommendations and stated they would implement them...

Full report: <https://www.auditor.ca.gov/reports/2024-047/>

Summary of recommendations: <https://www.auditor.ca.gov/reports/responses-2024-047-all/>

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Note: The report includes a recommendation to the legislature to provide additional funding for repatriation.

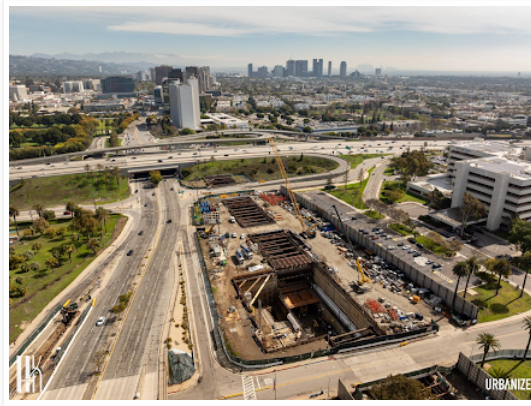
Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:     

Labels: [diversity](#), [legislature](#), [UCOP](#)

In case you are wondering



If you are experiencing traffic problems coming on Wilshire to UCLA from the west, here is what the subway-not-quite-to-the-sea looks like from above at the VA station and terminal just west of the Westwood station. In these idyllic photos, there are no traffic problems either on Wilshire or on the 405!



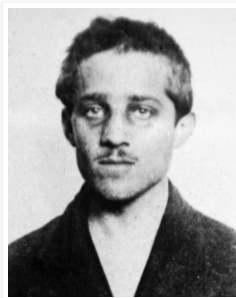
Source: <https://la.urbanize.city/post/aerial-perspective-metros-95b-subway-extension-westside>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:20 AM](#) No comments:     

Labels: [traffic](#), [transportation](#), [UCLA](#)

Saturday, April 19, 2025

We have a winner of the Gavrilo Princip award!



Gavrilo Princip

You may not recall the name Gavrilo Princip but whether or not you do, it appears that Sean Keveney has won the Gavrilo Princip award for 2025.

Princip accidentally started World War I by assassinating Archduke Ferdinand as part of a local nationalist plot. According to the [New York Times](#), Sean Keveney - the acting general counsel of HHS - seems to have accidentally set off the war between Harvard and the Trump administration. Harvard was apparently in discussions with the Trump people trying to avoid getting a Columbia-type letter. The negotiations were moving along until Keveney sent such a letter that undermined the talks and was taken by Harvard as an indication that no deal was possible and a declaration of war:

Harvard University received an emailed letter from the Trump administration last Friday that included a series of demands about hiring, admissions and curriculum so onerous that school officials decided they had no choice but to take on the White House. The university announced its intentions on Monday, setting off a tectonic battle between one of the country's most prestigious universities and a U.S. president. Then, almost immediately, came a frantic call from a Trump official.

The April 11 letter from the White House's task force on antisemitism, this official told Harvard, should not have been sent and was "unauthorized," two people familiar with the matter said. The letter was sent by the acting general counsel of the Department of Health and Human Services, Sean Keveney, according to three other people, who were briefed on the matter. Mr. Keveney is a member of the antisemitism task force.

It is unclear what prompted the letter to be sent last Friday. Its content was authentic, the three people said, but there were differing accounts inside the administration of how it had been mishandled. Some people at the White House believed it had been sent prematurely, according to the three people, who requested anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about internal discussions. Others in the administration thought it had been meant to be circulated among the task force members rather than sent to Harvard...



Sean Keveney

Full story at <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/18/business/trump-harvard-letter-mistake.html>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [7:46 AM](#) No comments:     

Labels: [diversity](#), [Harvard](#), [politics](#)

Letter to Columbia University Detailing Conditions for Restoration of Funding - Part 12 (more rationale)



Back in late March, we reproduced an item from a Columbia University alumni group concerning the pressures Columbia was under after receiving detailed demands from the feds. Since that time, Harvard rejected similar demands to great fanfare. But as the item below from the same group points out, where as both Harvard and Columbia are in the Ivy League, they are in different financial leagues.

Why Not All Universities Can Engage in Resistance Performance Art: A Tale of Financial Realities

Recently, we wrote about why Columbia's endowment can't simply be weaponized as a war chest to "fight Trump", in reaction to some of the feel-good-but-financially-illiterate calls out there to do so.

Mixed messages from Ivy League schools have emerged following recent events. The Trump administration froze select contracts or grants at Princeton and Harvard, prompting bold statements from these institutions. Princeton President Christopher Eisgruber solemnly declared his willingness to "say no to funding," although he stopped short of promising Princeton would "litigate forcefully," which he freely advised other universities to do weeks earlier. Likewise, Harvard's former president, Larry Summers, strongly urged wealthy institutions like Harvard to "resist the arbitrary application of government power" through "acts of resistance", but he didn't say exactly what this would be. Presumably, universities should be very, very angry and write a letter saying how angry they are.

What's behind this discrepancy between institutions? Why can Princeton and Harvard—at least in rhetoric—defy Trump, while Columbia seemingly struggles to take a similar stance?

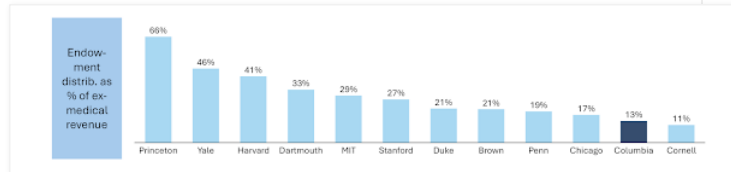
The uncomfortable truth boils down to money and the prosaic realities of university finance: universities can be asset-rich—that is, wealthy on paper—while being cash flow-fragile. Universities operate with uneven cash flow, receiving large sums on regular but extended cycles (tuition, government grants, reimbursements) but payroll and bills are due every few weeks. Last week, we showed the details of Columbia's unbalanced working capital cycle, where it takes roughly twice as long to collect cash versus the need to disburse cash. Even slight fluctuations in these flows can create financial strain. Old hands at Columbia will recount how in the 1980s even after selling Rockefeller Center land for \$400 million and doubling our endowment, there were still months when the University was nervous about making payroll.

Institutions sometimes rely on bond markets during crises, as Columbia and others recently did. However, debt markets can be unpredictable. Harvard's recent (attempted) bond issue of \$450 million—one might expect this global academic giant to find eager investors—was surprisingly undersubscribed, highlighting that investor confidence in university finances varies significantly.

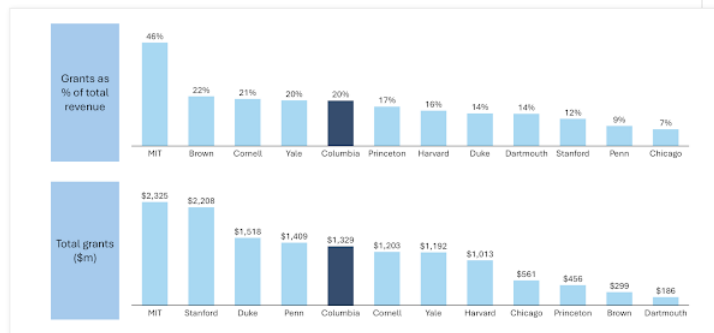
The Stand Columbia Society uses two key metrics to explain why some schools posture confidently, while others cannot.

We call the first one the endowment coverage ratio, the percentage of a university's revenue covered by endowment distributions (excluding patient care revenue to avoid distortions). Columbia's endowment distributions account for only 13% of its annual revenue—one of the lowest in the Ivy League. By comparison, Princeton's ratio is a robust 66%. A higher ratio means that the university is largely financially self-sufficient on its endowment distributions alone, without need for much external funding—and despite that

Princeton is still considering issuing bonds, indicating the cash flow fragility of universities. We note that Harvard's is a comfortable 41%. In other words, Columbia doesn't have the financial cushion to comfortably weather cash flow shortfalls.



This leads us directly to the second metric—what we call the grant coverage ratio. This represents the share of university revenue from government grants (including patient care, as grants are disproportionately driven by NIH and related agencies). Columbia ranks high in grant dependence, receiving almost three times more federal funding than Princeton (which doesn't have a hospital system.) Princeton's bold and brave willingness to risk federal funding underscores its relatively secure financial footing and low risk exposure. In the meantime, this high dependence exposes us disproportionately to federal risk.



There are two quirks with this approach. Notably, Harvard has a unique financial structure. Harvard's extensive healthcare affiliations (over 11,000 healthcare providers are affiliated with Harvard Medical School) separate much of its grant funding onto external entities' books. This is why the federal government is examining \$9 billion of Harvard's grants (spread over multiple years), despite only \$1 billion listed on its financial statements. Meanwhile, Stanford and MIT operate federal laboratories, skewing their grant figures.

But overall, what does this mean? It means Columbia is overexposed to federal funding risk from its high proportion of grants, and undercushioned from its low proportion of revenues from endowment distributions. Thus, when institutions like Princeton or Harvard publicly challenge political pressures, they speak from positions of greater financial stability with a higher capability of withstanding shocks. Brown, which also had \$510 million of federal funds frozen, instead put out a statement co-signed by Hillel and Chabad leaders on how they were successfully fighting antisemitism. It's easy to be brave when you're playing with someone else's poker chips or simply have a larger stack. Columbia, unfortunately, doesn't.

Columbia's cautious approach isn't cowardice or capitulation. It's basic financial reality and prudent financial management. Columbia has to play its hand carefully because it simply cannot afford reckless posturing. The fact that we punch above our weight academically despite these financial constraints is a testament to our strong faculty, location in New York, and the professionalism, conservatism, and care of our finance function's leadership. Columbia's mission is too important—its students, faculty, and staff too vital—to risk institutional stability in a battle it simply can't win financially.

In short, reckless bravado is cheap, but prudence and financial stewardship are costly, often unappreciated, but absolutely necessary.

Source: <https://standcolumbia.org/2025/04/05/issue-038-why-not-all-universities-can-engage-in-resistance-performance-art-a-tale-of-financial-realities/>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:30 AM](#) No comments:    

Labels: [Columbia](#), [Harvard](#), [politics](#)

May Day Strike News



From the [Bruin](#):

Two UC unions called on their members to strike May 1 for the fourth time this academic year. The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3299 – which represents service, patient care and skilled craft workers – said in a press release that it is striking in response to the UC's systemwide hiring freeze. The University Professional and Technical Employees-Communications Workers of America 9119 – which represents researchers and technical workers – will also strike May 1 in response to the hiring freeze, according to its website.

The two unions went on strike most recently April 1 but also went on strike in February and November, leading to limited dining, cleaning and mail services. AFSCME Local 3299 and UPTÉ-CWA 9119 have yet to reach a contract agreement with the UC, despite beginning negotiations in January and June 2024, respectively...

Full story at <https://dailybruin.com/2025/04/15/afscme-local-3299-upte-cwa-9119-announce-may-1-strike-against-uc>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:20 AM](#) No comments:    

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